

Polish Female Composers in the Nineteenth Century

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the activities of selected women-composers who worked in Poland in the 19th century. They have been presented in a broad social-political context. Specific historical conditions have been taken into account, which have contributed to the perception of women's creativity as a mission. The model of women's activity discussed in the categories of social and political mission influenced the shape and forms of Polish women's creativity in the first half of the century. In the second half of the century, women's access to education increased and finally a milieu of professional women-composers emerged. Among them, we should distinguish the group of women born into musical families, due to the fact that some among them took up the profession of composer.

Keywords: women composers, music culture of the 19th century, music and sex; history of Polish music; music criticism

Contemporary studies concerning nineteenth-century female composers readily centre around the word 'salon'. It is because several of the most famous nineteenth-century female composers, including Fanny Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann, were closely connected with that social institution. The cases of Clara Schumann and Fanny Mendelssohn are both viewed through the prism of the sociological concept of the artistic salon as proposed by Pierre Bourdieu. As a result, the salon is depicted as an elite meeting environment for artists, critics, and patrons, and involves the struggle for material and symbolic profits; one of the strategies of this struggle are disputes, which lead to the establishment of artistic norms and tastes.

The work of Polish female composers in the nineteenth century can be associated with the institution of the salon in only one but spectacular case, namely that of the St Petersburg salon of Maria Szymanowska, which attracted intellectuals, musicians, painters, and poets who shaped the model of elite culture inseparable from innovation which is so highly valued today. Innovation was also a dominant feature of Maria Szymanowska's original compositions. Among them, one can find miniature études which were the forerunners of Chopin's preludes (some of them have recently been recorded by Magdalena Lisak and released on an album entitled, predictably, 'The Salon of Polish Female Composers'). She also created many works in genres which were novel at that time, such as nocturnes, or pieces related to fashionable literary sources. An excellent example of the latter category is her *Świtezianka* [*The Fair Maiden from Svitez*] to the ballad by

Adam Mickiewicz, consciously basking in the rays of the poet's glory. However, because Szymanowska maintained close contacts with the European artistic world and co-created, rather than merely imitated, the current trends in music; she therefore remains a separate phenomenon in the history of Polish female composers.

The vast majority of nineteenth-century female composers from Poland did not make their mark in the history of music culture as owners of salons, even if they tended to lead an intense social life. They did not create their own artistic milieu, which does not mean that they were unfamiliar with the idea of female collaboration. Such an idea actually appeared quite early. One example of women's collective undertaking was the preparation of the 1816 edition of *Śpiewy historyczne* [*Historical Songs*] by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz. A writer, freemason, and one of the most influential figures of the Polish political scene at the turn of the 18th century, Niemcewicz was associated with the powerful house of Czartoryski. He spent some time at their court in Puławy. *Historical Songs*, created on the initiative of the members of the Warsaw Society of Friends of Learning (Pol. Warszawskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk), was a series of poetic *chants historiques* telling the stories of Polish rulers and knights from the past. Niemcewicz asked Maria Szymanowska and several women connected with the Puławy circle to compose melodies for his work. The group included Maria Wirtemberska and Cecylia Zamoyska, the two daughters of Princess Izabela Czartoryska, both musically educated by Wincenty Lessel, the director of the court ensemble in Puławy. Apart from them, other participants included Cecylia Beydale (a biological daughter of Lessel and Izabela Czartoryska), Konstancja Narbutt (who also took lessons with Lessel), and pianist Salomea Paris. The group of composers was complemented by some representatives of the aristocracy: Laura Potocka, Karolina Chodkiewicz née Walewska, and Franciszka Kochanowska. The women also made illustrations for the book.

A characteristic feature of the above-mentioned undertaking was that it was carried out with the awareness of its noble purpose. Owing to Warsaw's female aristocrats and artists spontaneously uniting around one goal, for the first time in the history of Polish music culture, a specific sense of female identity associated with the idea of a mission – a sense typical of Polish women – manifested itself. As concerns the kind of mission that was expected of Polish women in

the nineteenth century, it was to dedicate themselves to their husbands, children, and to humanity (these phrases, appearing precisely in this order, I took from the epitaph of Janina Polaczek-Kornecka, located in the funeral chapel at the Rakowicki Cemetery in Cracow). In the years of Poland's Partitions, the nation would of course be inserted between children and humanity. The preface to *Historical Songs* mentions the collective participation of women, linked precisely to the idea of sacrificing oneself to the nation. It reads:

The audience owes the full advantage and beauty of this work mainly to those women who, in imitation of their ancestors bringing up knightly youths to seek courage and fame, nowadays compete with us in civic zeal by applying their talents to propagating the memory of famous Polish warriors by means of profoundly moving songs¹.

Historical Songs were not only co-created by women – which can be interpreted as a sign of Niemcewicz's awareness of the increasing presence of women in Polish cultural life at the time when the work was created² – but also created for women. Announcing *Historical Songs*, the then president of the Warsaw Society of Friends of Learning Stanisław Staszic suggested that their goal is to arouse the interest of Polish mothers, who “will be the first to feed and educate the body and soul of young children, the last remnants of our nation's hope,” so as to “use talking, reading, singing, and even playing to constantly show children the history of their ancestors and thus always to remain to Polish children as true mothers, not as stepmothers.”³

¹ Orig. “Całą zaletę i okrasę dzieła winna będzie publiczność w znacznej części tej płci żeńskiej, która tak dawniej wiodła młodzież rycerską do odwagi i sławy, tak i dziś ubiegając się z nami w obywatelskiej gorliwości, udzieliła swych talentów, by tklwym pienia wdziękiem upowszechniać pamięć sławnych Polski wojowników.”

² Cf. M. Chachaj, ‘Postać Kobiety-Polki w dramatach historycznych Juliana Ursyna Niemcewicza’ [‘The Figure of the Polish Woman in Historical Dramas by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz’], *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska*, vol. VII, Lublin 1999, pp. 95–113.

³ Orig. “najpierwej karmić i kształcić będą ciało i duszę młodych dzieci, tych ostatnich szczątków nadziei rodu naszego [...] aby gadając, czytając, śpiewając, grając okazywały nieustannie swoim dzieciom ich przodków dzieje, aby w swych zabawach nawet, były zawsze polskich dzieci matkami, a nie macochy.” Quoted after: A. Wojda, ‘Konstruktorzy pamięci. O etosie heroicznym w *Śpiewach historycznych* Juliana Ursyna Niemcewicza’ [‘The Constructors of Memory. On the Heroic Ethos in Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz's *Historical Songs*’], in M. Cieśla-Korytowska and O. Płaszczewska (eds.), *Prace Herkulesa. Człowiek wobec wyzwań, prób i przeciwności* [The Labours of Hercules. The Human in

Almost half a century later, Maria Ilnicka returned to the idea of narrative poems about the history of Poland. Ilnicka was a writer actively involved in the then patriotic movement, archivist of the National Government during the January Uprising of 1863–64, supporter of women's emancipation, and the would-be editor of the excellent women's magazine *Bluszcz*. In 1863, she published a rhymed history of Poland titled *Ilustrowany skarbczyk polski* [An Illustrated Polish Treasure Chest] and asked Stanisław Moniuszko to write music for her texts. The composer set five poems from her collection (concerning Polish kings: the legendary *Piast*; *Bolesław I the Brave*; *Casimir III the Great*; *Jadwiga*, and *Jan III Sobieski*) and included them in his collection entitled *Pieśni historyczne* [Historical Songs]. The work did not gain much popularity, although in the 1920s its choral version was created by Piotr Maszyński.

By contrast, the religious songs with a hidden patriotic content composed by Filipina Brzezińska turned out to be a huge success. A distant relative of Maria Szymanowska, Brzezińska was a typical ‘Polish mother’ devoted to piety and patriotic activities — one of the initiators of the form of political protest which consisted in Polish women openly wearing mourning attire and jewellery that bore national symbols. Her collection *Śpiewnik religijny. Pieśni polskie rozmaitych autorów* [Religious Songbook. Polish Anthems by Various Authors] was published by Kaufmann in 1863 and included several Marian songs: *Pieśń w utrapieniu do Matki Najświętszej* [Song in Tribulation to the Holy Mother of God], *Pieśń do Najśw. Maryi Panny na zakończenie miesiąca maja* [Song to the Blessed Virgin Mary for the End of May], *Niebieskiego dworu Pani* [Hostess of the Heavenly Court], *Zdrowaś Mario* [Hail Mary], and *Nie opuszczaj nas* [O Do Not Leave Us]. The latter, composed to words by Father Karol Bołoz Antoniewicz, a charismatic preacher converting peasants in Lesser Poland after the bloody anti-serfdom rebellion known as the Galician Slaughter (1846), gained considerable popularity. During the January Uprising, it played the role of a patriotic song, similarly as the song *Serdeczna Matko* [Kind Mother] sung to the melody of the solemn anthem *Boże, coś Polskę* [God, Thou Who Hast Poland]. In later years, *Nie opuszczaj nas* was reprinted several times in collections of Polish national songs.

the Face of Challenges, Tests, and Adversities], Kraków, 2012, p. 140 (the ultimate source of the quotation is *Myśli* [Thoughts] by Stanisław Staszic collected by Aleksander Kraushar).

Combining Catholic, especially Marian, religiousness, with patriotism was an emblematic feature of the attitudes of Polish women, not only in the Russian-occupied territories. In his work on Prussian censorship in Greater Poland, Grzegorz Kucharczyk quotes an excerpt from the police note concerning the collection of religious poetry by Aniela Koszutska. According to the police, “the devotion of [the author] to the Polish national sentiment for Holy Mary, Mother of God and Queen of Poland [...] is common among new Polish writers, particularly among middle-aged unmarried Polish women.”⁴ This opinion was issued in 1857. In that period, the generation of women born directly after the November Uprising of 1830–1831 entered their middle age (in nineteenth-century terms, the fourth decade of life). In this generation, one can indeed find many women who meet the above description. However, the emergence of a group of activists associated specifically with women’s movement is particularly worth noting. Behind the emergence of this group, which was quite large and thriving, stood some political and economic factors. Many daughters and wives of men repressed after the November Uprising were forced to take up employment. In 1838, the first volume of the yearbook *Pierwiosnek* [*Primrose*] came out in Warsaw. According to its subtitle, the periodical contained “only ladies’ writings” and was edited by Paulina Kraków née Radziejowska, the owner of a prosperous boarding school for girls in Warszawa. Three years later, the same city saw the foundation of *Pielgrzym* [*Pilgrim*] by Eleonora Ziemięcka. Both magazines played a pioneering role when it came to making women’s works available to the public and consolidating the female environment. The editors devoted much space to art, treating it as “representative of religious ideas that indicate the object of hope, love, and faith.”⁵ The quotation comes from Ziemięcka’s article ‘Kilka słów o sztuce u nas z powodu Wystawy Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie w 1845 roku’ [‘A Few Words about Art

in Our Country on the Occasion of the Exhibition of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 1845’], which is representative of her attitude as a promoter of Christian philosophy. The continuation of Paulina Kraków’s *Pierwiosnek* was *Kalendarz Ilustrowany dla Polek* [*Illustrated Calendar for Polish Women*], published by Ziemięcka from 1861. In the second volume of the *Calendar* (1862), the editor published a text titled ‘Wspomnienie’ [‘A Recollection’]. It concerned her meeting with Chopin in Marienbad in 1836 and demonstrated a belief in the connection between music and the ‘higher world’. According to the author, Chopin’s genius was “a phenomenon of spiritual beauty.” She also saw this beauty in the composer himself, allegedly infused with love for his relatives to the point of making it “a second religion.”⁶

In the Polish women’s environment, largely influenced by the editors of the above-mentioned periodicals, an idealistic cult of Chopin and Moniuszko flourished. The latter phenomenon was more practical and focused on various charitable activities. In the 1861 edition of the *Illustrated Calendar for Polish Women*, Eleonora Ziemięcka published a biographical article about Moniuszko, supplemented with a detailed list of his works. In the same year, some female students attending the boarding school run by Paulina Kraków performed one of the cantatas by Moniuszko (according to *Kurier Warszawski* [Warsaw Courier] 1860, No. 144). Present-day biographers have duly highlighted the role of Maria Kalergis as Moniuszko’s patron, discussing her contribution to the organisation of a concert supporting the composer in March 1858. Much has also been written about the support that the Moniuszko received from the owners of Warsaw’s salons: Paulina Wilkońska and Nina and Jadwiga Łuszczewska. However, there is much evidence to indicate that Moniuszko was supported by Warsaw’s women to a greater extent, and more systematically. On the second day after the premiere of *Halka* (January 2, 1858), the composer sent a letter to his wife, which includes the following postscript by his brother-in-law Jan Müller: “After the fourth act, the weaker sex seemed to go mad because they applauded furiously.”⁷ The names of several representatives of ‘the weaker sex’ of aristocratic and patrician origin were enumerated

⁴ G. Kucharczyk, *Cenzura pruska w Wielkopolsce w czasach zaborów (1815–1914)* [*Prussian Censorship in Greater Poland under the Partitions, 1815–1914*], Poznań, 2001, p. 325.

⁵ Orig. “Przedstawicielk[a] idei religijnych uzmysławiających przedmiot nadziei, miłości i wiary.” E. Ziemięcka, ‘Kilka słów o sztuce u nas z powodu Wystawy Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie w 1845 roku’ [‘A Few Words about Art in Our Country on the Occasion of the Exhibition of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 1845’], quoted after: J.M. Sosnowska (ed.), *Pionierki. Krytyka artystyczna kobiet 1839–1879. Antologia* [*The Pioneers. Women’s Art Criticism in 1839–1879. An Anthology*], Warsaw, 2016, p. 94.

⁶ See: E. Ziemięcka, *Wspomnienie przez [...] [A Recollection By...]*, quoted after: I. Poniatowska (ed.), *Chopin w krytyce muzycznej (do I wojny światowej). Antologia* [*Chopin in Music Criticism (until WWI). An Anthology*], Warsaw, 2011, p. 68.

⁷ Quoted after: W. Rudziński, *Stanisław Moniuszko. Part I*, Kraków, 1955, p. 390.

by Kurier Warszawski in a press note dedicated to the concert held for Moniuszko. The list included Deotyma, Mme Rogozińska, Mme Reszke (Emilia Reszke née Ufniarski, wife of Jan Reszke, lawyer and owner of one of the leading music salons in Warszawa), Mme Żylińska, Mme Idzikowska, Countess (Michalina) Rzyaszczewska née Radziwiłł, Mme Sierżputowska (wife or sister of a major general residing in Warszawa), and Princess Janina Czetwertyńska (later Jełowicka). In the early 1860s, several of these ladies left Warsaw, but the remaining group, according to the scant sources available, continued the mission of supporting Moniuszko by organising applause during the performances of his works.

A surviving copy of Alina Moniuszko's letter to Apolinary Kątski, director of the Warsaw Music Institute, concerning a performance of *Widma* (*Phantoms*) by the Institute in March 1865, contains a kind request to provide "four tickets for the aristocratic ladies who personally asked me to obtain numbered seats for them on the right-hand side of the concert hall, possibly in the rows nearest to the stage." Princess Janina Czetwertyńska, a singer and composer, certainly deserves attention in our context. She was not among the above-mentioned ladies because before the concert she had moved to Podolia to live there with her husband, Adolf Jełowicki. A large paper on Czetwertyńska was published in 1938 in the Poznań monthly *Tęcza* by the well-known historian Stanisław Wasylewski⁸. It bears the title 'Tryumfy księżniczki Janiny' ['The Triumphs of Princess Janina']. The author draws a picture of an endearing woman of manifold talents, not limiting her activity to the role of a gifted socialite, but writing her own novels and plays, improvising poems, composing songs and salon pieces, and publicly performing as a singer. Wasylewski devoted relatively little space to the patriotic activities of the princess during the January Uprising (the role of an emissary distributing the manifestos of the National Government) and in the period preceding the rebellion (emancipation of the peasants in her estate in order to encourage them to join the insurgents). These actions are discussed by Stanisław Sierotwiński in the entry for Czetwertyńska in the Polish Biographical Dictionary.

Although there are no religious and patriotic works in her output, Czetwertyńska contributed to the women's mission. Visiting the Polish diaspora's salons abroad – including the Hôtel Lambert, which under the patronage

of Prince Adam Czartoryski was the hub of Polish émigré political life – she distinguished herself as a propagator of the national 'bards' – Moniuszko and Mickiewicz. Czetwertyńska personally performed Moniuszko's songs in Paris, where she stayed until her marriage (1863).

Apart from some separate editions of her songs, Czetwertyńska prepared a collective volume titled *Śpiewnik księżniczki Janiny Czetwertyńskiej* [*Songbook of Princess Janina Czetwertyńska*], which came out in 1865 in Kyiv under the imprint of the publishing house of Antoni Kocipiński. The songbook, dedicated to "our brothers from the gentry," contains the following songs: *Złota nitka* [*Golden Thread*] to words by Janina Opacka; *Zwij mnie dusza* [*Call Me Spirit*] to words by Byron in Stefan Witwicki's translation; *Kwiateczek* [*Little Flower*] to words by Heinrich Heine in Leon Zbyszewski's translation (a priest and patriotic activist associated with the environment of the Hôtel Lambert) and three settings of Mickiewicz's paraphrases of Schiller's poems: *Sen* [*The Dream*], *Pieśń myśliwego* [*A Hunter's Song*], and *Rękawiczka* [*The Glove*].

In her doctoral dissertation titled *Pieśni i ballady Stanisława Moniuszki do słów Adama Mickiewicza w kontekście muzycznych interpretacji utworów poety* [*Songs and Ballads by Stanisław Moniuszko to Words by Adam Mickiewicz in the Context of Musical Interpretations of the Poet's Works*], Małgorzata Sulek criticised the music for *Sen* for numerous errors, which, she claims, prove the dilettantism of the composer. She was also disappointed by the fact that the work was utterly bereft of the "oneiric and erotic mood of the original poem, not to mention its controversial 'female you'."⁹ The discrepancy between the positive remarks of the nineteenth-century contemporaries and the crushing opinion of the modern musicologist can easily be explained. This difference of opinion results from the privileged position of aristocratic ladies in salons, a phenomenon commented upon by many sociologists and reflected in novels written at that time. Their talent, even if only a meagre one, was valued as an elegant addition to a person worthy of the greatest interest owing to her birth. Czetwertyńska was hardly an exception. One can mention several other

⁸ S. Wasylewski, 'Tryumfy księżniczki Janiny' ['The Triumphs of Princess Janina'], *Tęcza*, no. 1, 1938.

⁹ M. Sulek, *Pieśni i ballady Stanisława Moniuszki do słów Adama Mickiewicza w kontekście muzycznych interpretacji utworów poety* [*Songs and Ballads by Stanisław Moniuszko to Words by Adam Mickiewicz in the Context of Musical Interpretations of the Poet's Works*], a doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of Iwona Puchalska, presented at the Faculty of Polish Philology of the Jagiellonian University in 2016, p. 50.

well-born ladies who were moderately gifted but held in a disproportionately high esteem by their contemporaries. The list includes, for instance, Julia Grodzicka and Maria Ludwika Broel-Plater. Grodzicka was the wife of Count Rzewuski, singer, author of salon miniatures and comic operas (*Obiadek z Magdusią* [*Lunch with Magda*], 1821; *Matzonek wszystkich kobiet* [*All Ladies' Spouse*], c. 1825; *Malwina i Ernest* [*Malwina and Ernest*], 1825). Her operas were publicly staged in Cracow, probably with the composer's participation. Broel-Plater (née Zyberk Plater, 1845–1926), the wife of the well-known bibliophile and souvenir collector Włodzimierz Broel-Plater, wrote serious sacred music and numerous miniatures and songs to Polish and Italian texts, many of which have survived.

There was incomparably less interest in the 'lowborn' female composers. Biographical notes concerning some of them can be found in the *Dictionary of Polish Musicians* by Wojciech Sowiński, published in Paris in 1874, but their inclusion in the publication depended more on their family ties with famous people (as in the case of Ludwika Dmusewska¹⁰, Helena Lessel¹¹, Natalia Lipińska¹², and Julia Niewiarowska née Brzozowska) than on the abundance or value of their oeuvre — some of female music composers authored only one work each! Their activity, albeit of interest, has fallen into oblivion. This is also the case with Natalia Lipińska, the author of, among others, mazurkas dedicated to Chopin. Studies dedicated to female composers frequently only mention in passing the name of Niewiarowska, the wife of Aleksander Niewiarowski, a writer associated with the progressive literary group known as Cyganeria Warszawska [The Warsaw Bohemians]. She was a progressive figure as well — not only a composing pianist, but also a brave journalist who studied both piano and theory of music under the guidance of organist August Freyer at Warsaw Music Institute. Apart from her, one should also mention Ludwika Jeske-Choińska née Mikorska (1849-1898), another female composer from the mid-19th century associated with the literary circles. The wife of the

well-known Jewish writer Teodor Jeske-Choiński, she simultaneously focused on music and literature; in 1884 she published a novel titled *Muzykanci* [*Musicians*]. Her vocal education took place abroad; later she studied music theory at Warsaw Music Institute, which included classes of harmony, counterpoint, and orchestration, providing her with a professional foundation for the profession of composer. Jeske-Choińska's best known music work is the orchestral ballad *Rusalka* [*The Rusalka*], awarded at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. She also composed numerous songs and miniatures, as well as three comic operas that were performed on open-air stages in Warsaw: *Filutka* [*Joker*] (performed in 1884), *Zuch dziewczyna* [*Brave Girl*] (staged in 1885) and *Markiz de Créqui* [*Marquess de Créqui*] (presented in 1891).

Undoubtedly, the vast majority of female composers' output from in the central decades of the nineteenth century shows evidence of dilettantism. Most of them are salon compositions, songs to the words of popular Polish poets, or romances to French texts. The instrumental pieces include lyrical and dance miniatures, usually for piano. As concerns the titles¹³, they hardly differ from their European counterparts typical of that era. To being with, there was a tendency to refer to 'memories' connected with various places. The lost waltz cycle by Amelia Załuska was therefore entitled *Echo Iwonicza* [*Echoes of Iwonicz*]. Other examples include *Wspomnienie chatki* [*Memories of a Cottage*] by Tekla Bądarzewska; the mazurka *Le Perle de Podolie* by Paulina Gnatkowska; the waltz *Echa Podola* [*Echoes of Podolia*] by Wanda Tertilt; and the barcarolle *Rimembranza di Venezia* by Maria Broel-Plater. Apart from places, sentimental events and situations could easily become an inspiration. A good example is the unforgettable *Modlitwa dziewicy* [*Prayer of a Virgin*] by Tekla Bądarzewska, printed in the *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* in 1859, which resulted in the extraordinary career of this work all over the world. Naturally, titles referring to feelings and moods were also frequent. In this category one should mention *Słodkie marzenie* [*Sweet Dream*] and *Nadzieja* (Hope) by Bądarzewska; mazurka *Tęsknota i nadzieja* [*Longing and Hope*] by Józefa Maliszewska; *Mój luby* [*My Beloved*] by

¹⁰ An opera singer and wife to Ludwik Dmusewski, director of a Warsaw theatre. She composed a *Waltz and Mazur* published by Antoni Brzezina in (Warsaw 1825).

¹¹ It has not been possible to establish the family relationship between this composer and Wincenty or Franciszek Lessel, kapellmeisters at the court of Prince Adam Czartoryski. Several of her works were printed in *Echo Muzyczne*, edited by Józef Sikorski.

¹² Primo voto Parczewska, daughter of the famous violinist Karol Lipiński.

¹³ The titles quoted below come from the catalogue of the exhibition *Oto artyści pełnowartościowi, którzy są kobietami... Polskie kompozytorki 1816–1939* [*Here We Have Fully Competent Artists Who Happen to Be Women... Polish Women-Composers 1816–1939*], held by the author of this paper together with Lilianna Moll at the Silesian Library in Katowice on 5th – 20th November 2003 (Katowice 2003).

Ludmiła Jeske-Choińska; *Zakochana* [Woman in Love] by Helena Krzyżanowska, and *Reverie* by Antonina Adamowska. Sometimes the title refers to the person of the dedicatee. For instance, *Leon Mazur* by Franciszka Smólska was dedicated to Prince Leon Sapieha. Mythological associations were also popular. Examples include the quadrille *Diana* by Jadwiga Brzowska as well as *Sylfida* [Sylphid] and *Diabelstwo* [Monstrosity] by Julia Niewiarowska. However, amateur compositions were typically supplied with cliché titles straight from the 'boudoir', such as *Nightingale*, *Pansy*, *Flower*, or *Beautiful Days of May*. Other authors were satisfied with more conventional titles, such as nocturne, serenade, barcarolle, and impromptu.

Among the piano dances, mazurkas were the most popular. Filipina Brzezińska, Janina Czetwertyńska, Tekla Bądarzewska and many other amateur composers of more or less noble birth had them in their output. Slightly less popular were waltzes, followed by polkas, quadrilles, and polonaises. The latter seem to have attracted the least attention. The authors of the only two polonaises composed by Polish women-composers before 1860 were Amelia Załuska and Maria Szymanowska. Załuska probably drew some inspiration from the musical works of her father, Prince Michał Kleofas Ogiński (1803–1858), who penned some famous polonaises. The popularity of mazurkas, waltzes and polkas was associated with the universal function of these genres as cosmopolitan salon dances as well as with their functional character – they quite often appeared in print under the title *Echo of a Ball*, indicating their previous use during such an event. Naturally, not only women were involved in the preparation of such *Echoes*. According to the surviving sources, one can even observe a tendency to exclude them from providing musical settings for such official balls in which the representatives of the partitioning powers participated.

One can find very few names of Polish female composers on the list of musical encomia dedicated to the authorities of the day. Around 1856, Countess Stefania Komorowska paid homage to the Russian Emperor Alexander II with her triumphal march titled *Souvenir de Mitau*; the work may have been written on the occasion of the tsar's visit to Warsaw in May 1856.

Nineteenth-century women's songs featuring explicit patriotic content are also very rare, especially compared to how many of them written in the first decades of the 20th century. This can be explained by the impact of the above-described idea of the mission of Polish women,

which assigned to them the modest and inconspicuous role of Catholic mothers and sisters of the male 'knights', while the latter were to act as political frontbenchers. An exception that proves the rule are the patriotic songs by Krystyna Grottger, daughter of a Hungarian hussar and wife to Jan Józef Grottger (a participant of the November Uprising, father of the famous painter Artur Grottger). These songs are said to have earned considerable popularity during the Spring of Nations (1848). Such information, not confirmed by other sources, can be found in one of the encyclopaedic entries quoted by Maja Trochimczyk. The text in question does not specify whether the songs were actually popular in Poland. Moreover, the only piece by Grottger that has survived in Polish collections is her *Quadrille* for piano¹⁴.

On the other hand, many women's compositions were donated to charity. It is difficult to relate the purpose of writing such pieces to their genre. This category includes both conventional sentimental genres and (less numerous) songs with covert patriotic content (e.g. *Melodia 'Życie w niewoli'* [Melody 'Life in Captivity'] by Wanda Kossakowska to words by Karol Kucz, an editor of *Kurier Warszawski*).

A more important though less sizeable group of works by nineteenth-century Polish women-composers comprises works written by professional composers, performers, and music teachers. The number of such women-professionals increased in the course of women's multifaceted emancipation that changed their social-economic status. It affected, among others, unmarried or divorced women forced to seek permanent employment in order to make a living. On the other hand, the second half of the nineteenth century provided new opportunities for professional musical training not only in the 'traditionally feminine' fields such as piano and voice but also in music theory and fundamentals of compositions (harmony, counterpoint, and orchestration).

A large number of Polish female composing musicians active in the second half of the 19th century came from musical families. Great success was achieved by such concert pianists as Jadwiga Brzowska-Méjean (1830 – after 1886) and Natalia Janotha (1856-1932). Brzowska was the daughter of Józef Brzowski, a professor of composition at Warsaw Music Institute. She studied music under the guidance of her father and uncle Karol

¹⁴ M. Trochimczyk, 'From Mrs. Szymanowska to Mr Poldowski: Careers of Polish Women Composers,' in *A Romantic Century in Polish Music*, Moonrise Press, 2009, p. 13.

Kurpiński; for one season she took lessons with Ignaz Moscheles in Leipzig. She was known in the world as a pianist and propagator, among others, of Chopin's works. Her compositions, several of which appeared in musical supplements to the Warsaw magazine *Echo Muzyczne*, have fallen into oblivion.

Natalia Janoth's output of music has been much better preserved. She was educated by her father Józef Janotha, professor of piano at Warsaw Music Institute, as well as some German masters. W. Bargiel, E. Rudorff, and F. Weber taught her piano and music theory. Later she became Clara Schumann's student and collaborator.

There are nearly 400 surviving pieces by Janotha. They were written mostly before 1900 and include, among others, a number of mazurkas and polonaises for piano, conceived as 'responses' to the works of Chopin, whose music she persistently promoted. Another group of compositions by this artist consists of cycles of miniatures inspired by her personal passion for mountaineering. Her expedition to the Tatra Mountains in 1883 and conquering the summit of Gerlach resulted in the piano cycle titled *Tatry. Wrażenia z Zakopanego* [*The Tatra Mountains. Impressions from Zakopane*] published in Brussels around 1890. In the aftermath of a similar expedition to the Alps, Janotha wrote *Fleurs d'Alpes*, published in Warsaw without a date. She also wrote chamber, orchestral, and even large-scale vocal-instrumental music. Following the example of Clara Schumann, she prepared her own cadenzas for Beethoven's *Piano Concerto in G major*. Some of her compositions Janotha dedicated to royal patrons. She recorded her performance of the bravura miniature piece *Kurant Polski* [*A Polish Courante*].

Roughly at the same time, some other female pianists, a little younger than Janotha, were involved in pedagogy and composition. These were: Leokadia Myszyńska-Wojciechowska (1858–1930), Helena Krzyżanowska (1860–1937), Antonina Adamowska née Szumowski (1868–1938), Maria Wąsowska-Badowska (c. 1868 – after 1927), and Katarzyna Jaczynowska (1872–1920). The only traces of the musical output of Wąsowska and Jaczynowska are two press articles. The first one was published by Henryk Opieński in 1909 in *Bluszcz*¹⁵, whereas the second one came out anonymously in the same year in *Kurier Lwowski*¹⁶. Leokadia Myszyńska-Wojciechowska

is a much less obscure figure. A teacher and concert pianist, she graduated from Warsaw Music Institute. Apart from studying piano and harmony in this institution, she took private lessons in composition with Zygmunt Noskowski and Władysław Żeleński. Myszyńska-Wojciechowska is the author of over a hundred works, both small-scale (piano miniatures, variations, preludes, songs) and more extensive ones (a violin sonata, chamber and orchestral works, including *Fantasy* for orchestra).

Antonina Adamowska née Szumowska was a less prolific composer, but a better-known performer. She graduated from Warsaw Music Institute. She studied piano under the guidance of Rudolf Strobel and Aleksander Michałowski; as concerns composition, she was self-educated. After graduation she left for Paris. From 1889 she attended lessons with Ignacy Jan Paderewski, who as a student at the Institute had taken lodgings with her husband Józef (violinist) and brother-in-law Tymoteusz (cellist), becoming their close acquaintance¹⁷. Later she left with her husband and brother-in-law for the United States, touring with them as the well-known Adamowski Trio. After finishing her virtuoso career, she became a piano teacher at the New England Conservatory in Boston. Adamowska composed few original works. They were peripheral to her other preoccupations. Some of them survived in manuscript; they are typical salon miniatures.

The most famous of the above-mentioned female composers was Halina alias Helena Krzyżanowska, pianist and teacher with the diploma of the Paris Conservatoire, active in Paris and later in Rennes in the south of France. During her lifetime, and probably not without her own personal encouragement, she was rumoured to be a countess and distant relative of Chopin's mother Justyna Krzyżanowska. Nowadays this biographical legend has been questioned, though. She composed many works. They include both small-scale piano pieces (mazurkas, waltzes, polonaises, and cracoviennes) as well as large orchestral and chamber works (*Fantasia* for piano and orchestra, *Sonata* for cello and piano, the one-act opera *Magdusia*).

It seems worthwhile to dedicate some attention to the element of self-creation evident in the promotional activities of Krzyżanowska (countess, Chopin's relative).

¹⁵ H. Opieński, 'Muzyka' ['Music'], *Bluszcz*, no. 52, 1909.

¹⁶ 'Różne wiadomości. Rola kobiety w muzyce polskiej' ['Various News. Women's Role in Polish Music'], *Kurier Lwowski* no. 271 of 12th June 1909 (the afternoon issue), p. 9.

¹⁷ Cf. a letter from Ignacy Jan Paderewski to his father, written before 12th December 1878. In: *Ignacy Jan Paderewski. Listy do Ojca i Heleny Górskiej (1872–1924)* [Ignacy Jan Paderewski's Letters to His Father and to Helena Górską], M. Perkowska-Waszek, M. Sulek and J. Szombara (eds.), Warsaw, 2018, p. 59.

It can be viewed as a reflection of both female weakness and strength. However, there is another example proving the strength of a similar policy – the case of Wanda Landowska (1879–1959), who consistently created her own artistic legend using modern advertising techniques. From the beginning of her career, she made sure that information about her concerts and intentions as well as sophisticated photographs hit the press. Landowska knew how efficiently to generate an atmosphere of increased interest around herself. This included the ability to write about music, in an engaging and zestful manner.

Landowska's activities mostly belong to the 20th century, but it is worth mentioning that her debut as pianist and composer of salon miniatures and songs written in a rather conservative style took place in 1896. It was still in the 19th century that she also decided to study composition abroad. Immediately after graduating from Warsaw Music Institute she went to Berlin to learn under Heinrich Urban. She stayed there for four years, taking a full course of studies. At the end of 1899, she made her debut at the Beethovensaal in Berlin with a performance of the *Triple Concerto* by J.S. Bach (together with Emma Koch and Martha Siebold). At this point, she took another radical decision: to dedicate herself to early music. Performance. As a result, she rethought her composition projects as well, becoming a co-creator of the folk variety of neoclassicism (she claimed that the harpsichord she promoted was ideally suited to perform this type of music).

There is an intriguing proof of Landowska's courage that gives her a place among modern artists consciously building their careers. Still as a beginner composer (in 1900), she dared to write *Rhapsodie juive* for piano and orchestra and thus openly manifest her Jewishness. Certainly shocking for many adherents of the so-called social anti-Semitism prevalent in Warsaw at that time, it was probably related to the activities of journalist Henryk Lew, Landowska's husband. Lew strove to promote Jewish culture in the Polish society; in the same 1900 he published Hieronim Cohn's translation of the novel *Muzykant* [*A Musician*] by Sholem Aleichem in his printing house in Warsaw. Interestingly enough, when a year later Landowska prepared her rhapsody for publication in Paris, where she resided, she changed the title to *Rhapsodie orientale*, correctly assessing her status in the artistic world at that time.

The above-presented outline of the activities of nineteenth-century Polish women-composers is far from complete, but it signals a broad spectrum of amateur and

professional undertakings and attitudes. It once again proves the direct relationship between the social status of women and the character and impact of their works. Maja Trochimczyk has studied this issue examining how female composers played with their marital status, i.e. how frequently they used their maiden and married names (in Polish, this can be marked by attaching the endings '–ówna' or '–owa' to the name)¹⁸. The idea is fascinating, but more useful with regard to the study of the twentieth-century state of affairs. The primary wave of fashion for attaching such maiden endings ('–ówna', but also '–nianka') occurred after 1900. It resulted from increased interest in cultivating the pure forms of the Polish language, which was inspired by journalists and teachers under the influence of patriotic ideology in its most popular 'intellectual' version. On the covers of women's works published in Poland in the nineteenth century, the names of their authors were usually printed in their basic forms. The '–owa' ending, reserved for married ladies, appeared rarely and had a specific function. It acted as a carrier of information concerning the status of the husband that the woman 'belonged to'; the more influential and well-known he was, the more eagerly such an ending was applied. Maiden endings were not used in the nineteenth century, which is a pity because it would give contemporary researchers at least an excuse to find a plausible link between the forms of the female composers' names and their family status.

Apart from class affiliation, marital status was, no doubt, a factor seriously affecting the scope of composers' activity. Let us return to the insinuating remark of a Poznań policeman who, by reporting on 'unmarried middle-aged women', inadvertently linked their creative activity with age understood

¹⁸ M. Trochimczyk, op. cit., pp. 21–27. The said publication also tackles the issue of triple names: Mikorska-Jeske-Choińska, Iwanowska-Płoszko-Ossendowska. The first of set belonged to Ludmiła née Mikorska, who, after marrying Teodor Jeske-Choiński, received his double name. The second one belonged to Zofia Iwanowska, who had two husbands: Płoszko and Ossendowski. As Trochimczyk rightly observes, there are many ambiguities and errors in the spelling of names and surnames of Polish female composers. They result, among others, from the fact that in the pre-WWI times there was a great degree of freedom regarding the order in which the married and maiden names were quoted. Even the ending '–owa', referring to married women, can be ambiguous and confusing. For instance, the prematurely deceased composer Ilza Sternicka-Niekraszowa was, in fact, Sternicka née Niekraszowa (the daughter of Niekraszow, i.e. Nekrashov – a Russian surname).

as a factor clearly defining social roles. It is easy to observe that the most prolific and frivolous composers were maidens. Women's productivity and provocative activity declined with the status: from the unmarried to divorced, childless and elderly women. Marriage usually marked the end of artistic activity, effectively excluding the nineteenth-century Polish mothers from public roles. In the dictionary by Sowiński one can find much information about personal achievements that came before "the sacred knot was tied."

The division of women's lives in the 19th century into clear-cut periods resulted in a phenomenon of ladies manipulating their dates of birth. It became evident only at the end of the century and stemmed from the growing cult of youth. Among the self-rejuvenated composers were, for instance, Helena Krzyżanowska and Wanda Landowska.

Maja Trochimczyk has also examined the issue of nicknames. The title of her study, *From Mrs Szymanowska to Mr Poldowski*, might suggest that concealing one's female identity was the endpoint in the process of developing the social awareness of nineteenth-century composers. Obviously, this is not the case. Nineteenth-century Polish authors very rarely used male or female nicknames. Even in cases which constituted the rare exceptions to this rule, the nicknames were presented in such a manner that enabled one easily to decipher the composer's identity. Such games, giving the audience a premeditated wink, were few and consisted mainly in shortening the surname, sometimes also the first name and the nobility title to the initials. In this respect, the best example is the list of authors included in the collection *Ośm Śpiewek Polskich* [*Eight Polish Songs*] published by X.J.J. Cybulski's engraving shop in 1817. Male authors, all professional musicians (Kurpiński, Kaszewski, and Kratzer) were referred to on that list by their full names, while the aristocratic female amateurs – by abbreviated nicknames that were easy to decipher for insiders. For example, J.O.Z.z. X.C.O.Z stands for Jaśnie Oświecona Zofia z Książąt Czartoryskich Ordynatowa Zamoyska. [Her Illustrious Grace the Princess Zofia née Czartoryska, Wife to Entailer Zamoyski]. In the Puławy milieu that the princess belonged to, the custom of using abbreviated nicknames was also adopted by men: the collective pseudonym X was used by a group of theatre reviewers publishing in the Warsaw press (it is believed that Princess Zofia Zamoyska was one of the Xs).

This brings up the broader issue of women's music criticism and the contribution of Polish nineteenth-century women's magazines to the promotion of

women's works. While conducting library research into such periodicals¹⁹, I once discovered a certain paradox. In Polish women's magazines that came out in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, all the important texts about music, including music reviews, were penned by men. *Bluszcz*, founded by Maria Ilnicka, is a fine example in this respect. The music reviews published there were written by some highly-regarded critics from Warsaw whose opinions were typically harsh and scathing: Józef Sikorski, Jan Kleczyński, Juliusz Stattler, Władysław Żeleński, and Adam Dobrowolski. The editors of another popular women's magazine, *Tygodnik Mód i Powieści* [*Weekly of Fashion and Novels*] adopted a similar policy, entrusting the post of permanent music reviewer, among others, to Zygmunt Noskowski, a professor of composition at Warsaw Music Institute.

Female music reviewers, which was considered to be a job calling for high competence, did not appear in Poland until the 1890s, half a century later than the pioneers of Polish women's artistic criticism. They were no longer 'Polish mothers' but 'emancipated women' engaged in the women's and educational movement. Two of them, Cecylia Walewska and Maria Loévy used pseudonyms, but not male ones. Walewska adopted the coquettish nickname Selika made up of selected syllables of her first name and surname read according to the French pronunciation. Maria Loévy purposefully used the common Polish surname Szeliga, but sometimes she made use of the more provocative pseudonym Alma (Latin 'feeder'). There were also Waleria Marrené-Morzkowska and Bronisława Neufeldówna, who did not use any nicknames. The former simultaneously worked as a critic writing about paintings, and owned the first Polish feminist salon. The latter was the only female reviewer permanently employed in a daily newspaper; her brother contributed to the underground patriotic movement, dragging her into its actions. Two of the

¹⁹ M. Dziadek, 'Odrodźmy się w muzyce! Esej o muzyce w polskich czasopismach kobiecych oraz o roli kobiet jako krytyków muzycznych (do 1939 roku)' ['Let's Be Reborn in Music! An Essay on Music in Polish Women's Magazines, and on Women's Role as Music Critics before 1939'], in: M. Dziadek and L.M. Moll (eds.), *Odrodźmy się w muzyce! Muzyka na łamach polskiej prasy kobiecej i „kobieca” krytyka muzyczna 1818–1939* [Let's Be Reborn in Music! Music in Polish Women's Press and the 'Feminine' Music Criticism, 1818–1939]. Catalogue of the exhibition held at the Silesian Library in Katowice (16th November 2005 – 8th December 2005).

above-mentioned four were maidens and two — veterans of several marriages. Only one graduated from music studies (majoring in teaching). These female journalists, nevertheless, did not specifically deal with the issue of female music.

I have managed to find only one nineteenth-century text written by a woman that tackled (and that only in the form of a survey) the problem of women's works. It is a short introduction to an article by Cecylia Walewska, devoted to the debut of Wanda Landowska. It contains a brief description of the achievements of the female composers known to the author: Cecylia Chaminade, Tekla Bądarzewska, Leokadia Myszyńska, Ludmiła Mikorska-Choińska, and Helena Krzyżanowska²⁰.

Naturally, in Poland the individual female composers found their place in encyclopaedias and obituaries and were mentioned on such occasions as concerts, jubilees, or the publication of some specific works. However, the number of men's achievements recorded in the same circumstances, was incomparably larger.

At the end of the century, men also wrote several journalistic texts concerning women's works. In terms of content, they were all imitations of ideas introduced by Wagner, Nietzsche, or Wilde, and thus put emphasis on such issues as conservatism and the lack of independence in women's works — their insufficient depth, strength, naturalness and erudition, concealed by sensuality, coquetry, and the use of cheap tricks. It was a rare exception to look for a rational justification for the actual status of women's musical output, such as obstacles in the obtaining professional education that women encountered in those days. At the very end of the 19th century, the outstanding Lviv-based critic Stanisław Niewiadomski, nicknamed 'the Polish Hanslick' for his conservative beliefs and critical attitudes, wrote: "The claim that a woman is not capable of creative work in the field of music is true... The reason [...] is seen by some in the general shape of female psychology while others indicate that the necessary education has become accessible to women only recently. The second claim cannot withstand criticism in any way [...]. The reason seems to be

different; the talents that have appeared among the fair sex simply lacked creative energy and spontaneity. Cleverness will never make up for the shortage of the former, and passiveness will not turn into an original force. Therefore, in women's works, one should look for true art in those places where grace, and nothing more, is the goal."²¹

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²⁰ Selika [C. Walewska], 'Z estrady i ze sceny. Kobiety kompozytorki: panie Chaminade i Landowska' ['From the Theatre and Concert Stages. Women-Composers: Mmes Chaminade and Landowska'], *Wędrowiec*, no. 47, 1896, p. 410. The lack of Maria Szymanowska on this list is worth noting. In fact, in the 19th century, the person of this outstanding pianist and composer was interesting only for researchers studying Mickiewicz's life.

²¹ S[tanisław] N[iewiadomski], *Kobiety kompozytorki, Słowo Polskie* 1899 no. 45. Cf. also: 'Kompozytorki' ['Women-Composers'], *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 1895, no. 23; Anatol Krzyżanowski, 'Muzyka i jej mistrzyni' ['Music and Its Female Masters'], *Echo Muzyczne, Teatralne i Artystyczne* 1895 no. 602 (15), pp. 171; 613 (26), p. 171.

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